



## Tree Removal at Lower Yosemite Fall Area

### What's happening?

Beginning the week of March 31, tree removal and pruning activity will occur at the Lower Yosemite Fall area. During this time, there will be reduced automobile and bus access to the Lower Yosemite Fall parking area. Trees identified for removal include primarily conifers, however some “limbing” of dead black oak branches will also occur. This work is being completed as part of the Lower Yosemite Fall project.

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### Why is it necessary to remove these trees?

Three types of trees have been identified for removal. *Hazard trees* are those that are defective in some way, which may cause them to fall and injure visitors or employees in this heavily traveled area. In addition to removing hazard trees, contractors will trim and/or remove what are known as *vista trees*. These trees grow in the primary viewing corridors of Yosemite Falls, namely the Hutching's View (from Cook's Meadow) and Western View (from the existing Lower Yosemite Fall parking lot). Many of the vista trees obstructing historic views have grown up since the last round of vista clearing, completed about 60 years ago. Trees that occur within the construction footprint of the Lower Yosemite Fall project will also be removed.

Initial tree removal will occur during the first week of April, with pruning continuing throughout the month.

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### What happens to the trees after they are removed?

As is the procedure dictated by Congress under the park's hazard tree removal program, the contractor will remove the trees and transport them out of the park. The wood is then sold and the revenue is returned to the U.S. Treasury. Trucks will transport the logs out of the Valley via the Big Oak Flat Entrance. It is estimated that there may be about seven total loads.

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### What measures have been taken to protect wildlife?

This activity must occur within a unique window of opportunity in order to protect bat and bird species. Once the weather begins to warm up, bats emerge from hibernation to mate and establish maternity colonies. Also, birds begin nesting around mid to late April. Wildlife biologists—including a bat expert—have inspected the trees targeted for removal to determine if bat or bird species are actively inhabiting any of the trees. To date, biologists have not noted any active bat colonies in the tree work area. Additionally, biologists have listened for the territorial songs from male birds, which typically indicates that nesting will soon begin. So far, the birds have been quiet.

The park's policy is to avoid cutting trees in known bat habitats unless there is a clear and evident threat to public safety.